

Protected Species Program

Protected species include those protected under the [Endangered Species Act](#) and the [Marine Mammal Protection Act](#). On the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) these include sea turtles, cetaceans, polar bears, pinnipeds, and manatees just to name a few. OCS activities that have increased protected species monitoring and mitigations include seismic surveys, drilling operations and explosive removals of offshore structures. Noise from these activities is of particular concern to marine mammals as they use sound to communicate, navigate, and detect predators and prey.



BSEE oversees oil and gas activities in the Alaska, Gulf of Mexico (GOM), and Pacific regions. Activities vary by region both in the amount of activity and the protected species present.

BSEE EED ensures that industry complies with all environmental laws, regulations, and relevant provisions, stipulations, and conditions placed on OCS leases, plans, and permits. There are a number of protected species requirements for

industry operators when working on the OCS. These requirements are included in approvals or permits, but may also be summarized in Notices to Lessees (NTLs). Regional requirements, protected species information, stranding contacts, and other resources are provided below.

BSEE's National Coordinator for Protected Species is [Dr. Deborah Epperson](#). She is located in our Gulf of Mexico Regional Office Spaces and can be contacted at: (504) 736-3257.

Contact Us: protectedspecies@bsee.gov

BSEE operates out of three regional offices. The Gulf of Mexico region consists of OCS lands off the coast of Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama and Florida. It is the most developed on the OCS with more than 2,600 production platforms. The Pacific region is responsible for managing activities offshore California, Oregon, Washington and Hawaii. There are currently 23 platforms off the California coast. . The Alaska region encompasses the Beaufort and Chukchi Seas, the Bering Sea, Cook Inlet and the Gulf of Alaska. There is currently only one operational facility in the Alaska region. The following information is specific to each BSEE Region:

- Gulf of Mexico Region (GOMR)
- Pacific Outer Continental Shelf Region (POCSR)
- Alaska Outer Continental Shelf Region (AKOCSR)

Gulf of Mexico Region

Due to the size of the oil and gas program in the Gulf of Mexico, there are a number of mitigations in place that apply only to the GOM program. Many of these were developed in coordination with the National Marine Fisheries Service as part of the Endangered Species Act Section 7 consultation process. The following information is specific to the GOM Protected Species Program.

Notice to Lessees (NTLs)

[Implementation of Seismic Survey Mitigation Measures and Protected Species Observer Program](#)

[Vessel Strike Avoidance and Injured/Dead Protected Species Reporting](#)

[Marine Trash and Debris Awareness and Elimination](#)

Frequently Asked Questions

What reporting requirements should be followed if a dead or injured whale or dolphin is spotted?

Immediately call the Southeast Region Stranding Network 24-Hour Hotline:

1-877-WHALE-HELP (1-877-942-5343)

What reporting requirements should be followed if a dead or injured sea turtle is spotted?

Report it to the Sea Turtle Stranding and Salvage Network State Coordinator. A list of contacts for each state can be found here: [STSSN](#)

For all protected species, if the injury or death was caused by and industry vessel or activity, BSEE must be notified within 24 hours by email (protectedspecies@bsee.gov), in addition to notifying the appropriate stranding networks immediately.



Photo by USGS, A. G. Crowder (Marine Turtle Permit #176, NMFS permits #13307 and #13781 issued to K. Hart.). All marine turtle images taken in Florida were obtained with the approval of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS), the Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC), and the U.S. National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) under conditions not harmful to this or other turtles.

What is required if a manatee is spotted outside of Florida?

Contact BSEE via email at protectedspecies@bsee.gov with the details as well as the local wildlife agency or marine law enforcement. A report may also be sent to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service via email at manatee@fws.gov



Additional Protected Species Resources for the Gulf of Mexico Region

Whales and Dolphins

[NOAA Office of Protected Resources – Marine Mammals](#)

[NOAA Overview of Protected Species in the Gulf of Mexico](#)

[NOAA Marine Mammals and Noise Factsheet](#)

[Cetacean Unusual Mortality Event in Northern Gulf of Mexico](#)

Sea Turtles

[NOAA Office of Protected Resources – Sea Turtles](#)

[U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service – Sea Turtles](#)

Manatees

[United States Geological Survey Manatee Information Sheet](#)

[U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Manatee Sighting Guidance](#)

[U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Manatee Sighting Form](#)

General

[NOAA Marine Debris in the GOM](#)

[NOAA Vessel Strike Avoidance Measures and Reporting for Mariners](#)

Associated BSEE Documents Below:

BSEE Protected Species Office

Phone: (504) 736-3257

Email: protectedspecies@bsee.gov

Pacific Outer Continental Shelf Region

Marine Mammals

[NMFS – West Coast Region – Marine Mammals](#)

[NOAA Office of Protected Resources - Marine Mammals](#)

[NMFS West Coast Region – Report a Stranding](#)



Sea Turtles

[NMFS – West Coast Region – Sea Turtles](#)

[NOAA Office of Protected Resources – Sea Turtles](#)

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Alaska Outer Continental Shelf Region



[U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service – Alaska Endangered Species Information](#)

[NMFS – Alaska Field Office, Protected Resources](#)

[NMFS Alaska Marine Mammal Stranding Network](#)

[NOAA Office of Protected Resources - Marine Mammals](#)

Ribbon Seal. Photo: Mike Cameron, NOAA's National Marine Mammal Laboratory

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